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Proponent of SB236  
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EXHIBIT 20  
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SB 236

*I am the mother of a kidnap/murder victim. During a 1973 camping vacation in Montana, my 7-year-old daughter was pulled from our tent, held captive and raped repeatedly for almost two weeks before she was strangled to death and her body destroyed. Fifteen months later, the kidnapper was arrested and confessed to killing four children in Gallatin County. The death penalty did not deter those deaths!*

*My concern is that the death penalty further victimizes the victims' families. Many people believe that we need the death penalty as a matter of "justice" for the victims' families. I've worked with victim family members for 30-plus years and it's my constant experience that, for those folks who insist that a death sentence will be "justice" for them, the costly double trial and the appeals process mandated by the US Supreme Court keeps their heartache raw and bleeding for years. They hope that the execution will bring closure for them, but when (if) it finally happens, they find that they're just as empty, unhealed and unsatisfied as they were before. The death penalty does not do what they hoped for. The victims' sufferings are not undone nor are they restored to their families' arms.*

*To say that the execution death of one malfunctioning person is "just retribution" for the immeasurable and irreplaceable value of our lost loved ones is an outrageous insult! All that's accomplished is that now there's another victim and another grieving family. Does that honor the victim's memory?! They deserve more noble and beautiful memorials than one more "homicide", which is the "cause of death" listed on the executed person's death certificate.*

*We may truly believe that the killer has forfeited his/her right to live, but the truth is when we take on the same mindset as the killer uses when our loved one's life is taken, we demean and degrade our own personal honor and dignity, and certainly that of our state. We become that which we say we abhor - people who kill our own citizens - just like Iraq, Iran, China, Korea, etc.. The Bible reveals that Cain, Moses, and King David of the Old Testament, and Saul/Paul of the New, were murderers. Did God use the death penalty or is restorative justice the model to be used?!*

*Certainly, victim families have every right to the normal, valid, feelings of rage and even revenge. I readily admit that, initially, I'd have been happily able to take the life of the kidnapper with my bare hands, if only I'd known who he was. But -- should our laws be based on gut-level, blood-thirsty, barbaric desires for revenge or should they call us to higher principles more befitting that which we say we are and want others to see us as - a moral, civilized society - the quality of which is determined by how we treat the least among us?! We could use much of the money we'd save by abolishing the death penalty, and provide what the victims' families really need - support at court trials, education for children left without a wage-earner, counseling and financial aid.*

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